MANY SHADES OF GAY

Relationships at heart of several film fest offerings

By ANDREW WINEKE
THE GAZETTE

STRAND RELEASING

"The Bubble," from Israel, is a "Romeo and Juliet"-type story.

The Pikes Peak Lavender Film Festival marks its eighth year with a balanced line-up of comedies, dramas, foreign films and a lone documentary.

"We have a very varied program — a lot about relationships," says festival director Alma Cremonesi. "I think there's something for almost anybody in this program."

Lee Friedlander, director of the festival's opening film, "Out at the Wedding," will attend tonight's screening and host a discussion on Saturday with Mike Jones of Ted Haggard fame.

Here's a look at the festival features:

TODAY

6 p.m. — Reception

8 p.m. — "Out at the Wedding"

Grade: B+

Even Shakespeare would have blanched at stuffing this much mistaken identity into "The Comedy of Errors." That's one more Shakespeare comparison than this farce deserves, but "Out at the Wedding" does deliver consistent laughs, which makes up for (most) everything.

(2007; 1 hour, 36 minutes. Preceded by the short "Milonga Gay," 2006, Argentina; 5 minutes; Spanish with English subtitles).

GOFF-KELLAM PRODUCTIONS

"Out at the Wedding," a comedy, won the NewFest (New York City Lesbian and Gay Film Festival) Audience Award this year.

SATURDAY

12:30 p.m. – "Itty Bitty Titty Committee"

Grade: C

Liberally sprinkling feminist history and political diatribes into a supposed comedy is a guaranteed way to kill the yucks, which is what happens with this otherwise likable fantasy about a new generation of feminists taking up the banner.

(2007; 1 hour, 25 minutes. Preceded by the short "The Incredible Dyke," 2007; 10 minutes).

3 p.m – "Stealth (Comme des voleurs)"

Grade: B

This Swiss film starts out as a relationship comedy about a gay couple that hits a rocky patch after one of them, Lionel, becomes obsessed with his Polish heritage, then turns into a sibling reconciliation drama when Lionel and his sister, Lucie, travel to Poland to trace their ancestry. The parts don't fit seamlessly, but the strong characters provide an agreeable trip.

(2006, Switzerland; 1 hour, 52 minutes; French and Polish with English subtitles. Preceded by the

SEE LAVENDER • PAGE 6

details

8th Annual Pikes Peak Lavender Film Festival

When: Today through Sunday

Where: Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, 30 W. Dale St.

Tickets: $75 - full festival pass, $35 - four-film pass, $25 - opening night pass, $10 - individual tickets; 634-5583. Go to www.pplff.org for more information.

LAVENDER: 2007 festival includes just 1 documentary

FROM PAGE 4

short "Heartland," 12 minutes).

6 p.m – "The Gymnast"

Grade: C+

A one-time gymnast, now in her 40s and stuck in a loveless marriage, finds new purpose hen she's recruited to join a Cirque du Soleil-like troupe of acrobats and falls for a fellow performer. The visual stunts are impressive, but the gymnast is more of an outline than a real person, making it hard to buy into the storyline.

(2006; 1 hour, 36 minutes. Preceded by the short "Filled with Water," 2006, Australia; 5 minutes).

8:15 p.m. – "Shelter" (not reviewed)

A surfing fry cook is forced to grow up too fast when an unexpected relationship blossoms with his best friend's brother.

(2007; 1 hour, 30 minutes. Preceded by the short "The Police Box," 2007, Hong Kong; 4 minutes).

SUNDAY

Noon – "Red Without Blue"

Grade: B+

This documentary takes the most direct route imaginable to explore issues of gender and sexuality by looking at the lives of identical twins Mark and Alex. Mark is out and seemingly comfortable as a gay man, while Alex is weighing sexual reassignment surgery. In the end, it's hard to draw larger lessons from the twins' story, but it's still a fascinating family history.

(2007; 1 hour, 14 minutes. Preceded by the short "Flower Fokes," 2007; 7 minutes).

2 p.m – "Four Minutes (Vier Minuten)"

Grade: B-

A prickly prison piano teacher with a long-buried past takes on a violent prodigy as her project in this German film. Both women are searching for redemption, but it seems beyond their reach.

(2006, Germany; 1 hour, 48 minutes; German with English subtitles. Preceded by the short "Hi Maya," 2004, Switzerland; 12 minutes).

4:45 p.m. – "The Bubble (Ha Buah)"

Grade: A

You'll probably decipher the plot of this film about an ill-fated relationship between a reluctant Israeli reservist and a Palestinian in the first few scenes, but the strong performances and look at the fractured connections between their peoples make the story well worth watching.

(2006; Israel; 1 hour, 57 minutes; Hebrew and Arabic with English subtitles. Preceded by the short "Love Is Love")

7:30 p.m. – "Nina's Heavenly Delights"

Grade: B

This is essentially a lesbian version of "Bend it Like Beckham," and shares many of that film's charms and shortcomings. It's a great-looking film, particularly the many cooking scenes, and offers a reasonable measure of entertainment.

(2006; United Kingdom; 1 hour, 34 minutes. Preceded by the short "Kali Ma," India, 14 minutes).